

Leicester,  
Jan. 12, 1871,

Dear friend Webb;

A Happy New Year to you, and to Deborah, and to Alfred and his family, and to the wandering knight Richard. This is just the time of year that you visited us, and it brings you and Deborah continually to mind, - our readings, our talks, our laughings, - our mornings, our evenings - the occasional sleigh-ride, wh. martyred you, - the Concert of the Quintette Club, - the breakfast-table gossip, &c. &c. &c. And we often wish, & wish, you w<sup>d</sup>. look in upon us again, now especially, that the new furnace in the house makes it so easy to warm the chambers; - but you might not be so well pleased with that innovation, after all; and I must confess I only half like it. On some acct. I am glad of it; but I sh<sup>d</sup>. have been well content to go on in the old way, which in many respects was preferable, & to which I had grown well-used; & there's much in that at my time of life. Now, what do you care about all that? I was just thinking, & on the point of writing, - when I think also that you do care for just what concerns the comfort & well-being of your friends, little matters as well as large. Our house is aesthetically (if I know what that means) considerably changed, too, since you were here, - our numbers at this time being reduced to Ade. and myself, and she is just now over at the Dr.'s, following up some historical readings with Mrs. Charlotte Partridge, who wears well, spite of her great care & fatiguing duties to her father, who is now living his 100<sup>th</sup> year(!), and has got thro' nearly one half of it (Jan. 20). So I sit, with unusual stillness, at the "Secretary," near the piazza-window, and look



out upon bare, brown grass, occasionally white  
with thin patches of snow, & roads soft & a little  
muddy, from the great change which to-day has  
brought us from very sharp ( $2^{\circ}$  or  $3^{\circ}$  below  $0$ ) to very  
mild weather ( $42^{\circ}$  above); - a light haze spreads over  
field & wood; and we fervently hope rain is coming,  
for the dearth of water throughout this State, and over a  
far more extended area, is truly alarming, and is the  
subject of great anxiety of forebodings in common talk and  
in the newspapers. We continue to have weekly  
& very pleasant reminders of you; - now the "Spectator" &  
now the "Graphic" looks in upon us. The former gets more  
or less time given to it always, - the latter is always sure  
of careful inspection; its engravings take the place of  
much reading, & produce a more vivid impression of  
some scenes than any description could. Many of the  
wood engravings are admirable for delicacy. - I lately  
had a brief note fr. Richard (wh. I think I will enclose) asking  
me to cease sending the "Spectator" to him for the present,  
as he was about going away on a short voyage. So I  
look to you for instructions as to what I shall do with  
it. Meantime I pass the Nos. along to our good  
minister, Mr. Montgomery, who will take good care  
of them, & promises to have them safe "unless his house  
burns up"! The "Graphic" goes on to Mrs. Garrison,  
who was just as usual when I heard from her last  
week. Garrison was severely ill during the autumn,  
as you know; - seems quite well now, tho' very thin  
in flesh - i.e., say a week ago, he was quite well; but  
it is not safe inferring how long those phases of his  
health will continue. I haven't seen E. Quincy  
for an unusually long time. - Our Bessie left us,  
the day before New Year, to go on to New York, and

to the abolition of small type and the "advertiser" has recently given some in that respect instead of better; and yet is not this letter of mine as trying as small type?

The Worcester gentleman's notice of "Nathaniel Jarvis", not Pierce. - You observe that "Sitten and Oliver Johnston have left the 'Independent'"; - which was not "independent" enough to carry "Sitten and all his cretchets". - I wholly agree with you as



make a ten days' visit at Brooklyn; - then to be present at the marriage of her Cousin Saml. May (of Dorchester), which was to have taken place, - & did, we doubt not, - evening before last, in one of the New York Churches, with considerable parade and attendance, - very undesirable I think on such occasions, - indeed, disagreeable to me. - After that, Bessie is to go on to Washington and make a long talk<sup>2</sup> of visit there, to Miss Mary Lee, a very charming lady there, who lives with her parents in a simple & most tentative way. There she will stay a fortnight probably, & perhaps more; - so that all January will pass, doubtless, before we get her back again. From her mother we hear pretty frequently; her last letter was from Bologna, Italy, whither they had crossed from Munich, via Innsbruck & the Brenner Pass, - had seen briefly Verona & Padua (& 2 of them, Mr. May & one, had run across to Venice for a day) - and were to be in Rome to pass Christmas. She seems to have got quite well from the sharp experiences of her voyage. There's no telling what six women may not do when they lay their heads together, and have no man to interfere with them. Ade thinks we shall next hear they're all gone to Egypt. I can hardly say I expect it; but, as aforesaid, in such circumstances, all things are possible.

Yes, I duly rec<sup>d</sup>. the Notebook, No. 1., of Mr. May's journey - mark<sup>d</sup>. "read & approved" by myself & D., - for which, thanks, as well as for the book; but I am grieved to have you taxed with its heavy postage. I shall communicate (tomorrow, probably,) with the Worcester Lit<sup>y</sup> people; I hope to hear that your box has arrived, & in good order. You ask why I sent you that "large-written address from Cork" - only that you might see how fairly & faithfully yr. Cousin there had fulfilled your wish. I hope she doesn't understand aught else, but fear she may, as you say you wrote to her to address the paper in some way differently. I should be exceedingly sorry to have her think we were other than thankful to her

The Worcester gentleman's name is "Nathaniel Davis", not Pierce. - You observe that Tilton and Alice Johnston have left the "Independent"; - which was not "Independent" enough to carry Tilton and all his cretchets, - I wholly agree with you.



for taking so much pains for our benefit.

Are you still hopeful for the French? is there any good ground? I still try to think there is, for I'm sure the Prussian is pushing matters quite beyond all reason & need. Up to the imprisonment of that wretched Napoleon the surrender of MacMahon's army & shutting up Bazaine at Metz, I was wholly with Germany; and, even now, I can but admit that, if we look to just retributions or even our short-sightedness measure them, France is suffering the necessary discipline for her 20 years' submission to & glorification of that wretch. But as every point Germany has professed to or has ~~any~~ right to stand out for, might have been sufficiently well-attained at the time I speak of, no justification appears for her course since. But is it not remarkable how after an army of the French fall back before that German steel? Notwithstanding it all, I am still hoping for some combined movement on the part of the French that shall compel the G to a speedy retreat. Is there any reason to expect it? To-day news, (German) is of riots in Paris. The English fund for relief of sufferers by the War (£20,000, you say - a noble sum) is sent to French & Germans, I suppose? I have not yet met the "Fortnightly" article on Bismarck, - but I have seen several allusions to it in Am<sup>er</sup>. journals; and it will surely be reprinted here, if it be not already. I saw a curious decision lately at Edinburgh Medical College as to Women Students - they c<sup>ould</sup> attend the lectures (tho' even that was stoutly resisted) & might write for the prizes, but could be allowed to receive a prize, no matter how much merited. Solomons! - upon which occasion the authority of the "first lady of the land" was quoted, adverse to women becoming physicians & surgeons! - The Lohases are good girls, conscientious, devoted, disinterested - but lacking method in their work, & (I think) a sufficiently definite object. They overflow with good wishes, purposes, and schemes, & spare themselves labour or sacrifice; & they have encountered very great hazards & faced death itself in more ways than one. - You make a capital book, its author, & your manner of hearing it read; - and Ade. & I can tell you how much we have been amused with "Noddebo Parson".

which I need aloud to her. It is a truly original work, & preserve the unities wonderfully. - With love to Deborah & May.